

The Widow Smith House
New Haven, Connecticut

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Connecticut

Historic American Buildings Survey
Harold H. Davis, District Officer
29 Whitney Ave., New Haven, Conn.

THE WIDOW SMITH HOUSE
New Haven, Connecticut

OWNER: Mrs. Baleslaw Dapkiewicz

DATE OF ERECTION: 1780 c.1760

ARCHITECT: Not known

BUILDER: Samuel Hemingway

PRESENT CONDITION: Good

NUMBER OF STORIES: 2½

MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION:

1. Stone foundation
2. Brick Exterior walls
3. Oak floor boards
4. Oak roof framing
5. Chimney--brick

EXISTING RECORDS:

1. History of East Haven -- S. E. Hughes
2. Families of Ancient New Haven -- Vol. III -- Jacobus
3. Commemorative Biographical Record of New Haven County
4. East Haven and New Haven Land Records

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS:

1. East Front & North Elevation
2. South East Room, 1st floor
3. North East Room, 1st floor

THE WIDOW SMITH HOUSE

New Haven, New Haven County, Connecticut

To write a comprehensive data sheet on the Widow Smith House would be to write again the history of East Haven. However, for the sake of brevity a slight explanation should clarify, even to strangers, the unusualness of this section of New Haven in which the house is located.

The house now bears the street number of 1706 Quinnipiac Avenue and is included within the bounds of New Haven. From its location a stone might be thrown across the North Haven town line on the north, and to the east the East Haven line is not much further distant.

From earliest Colonial days the people on the east side of the river were anticipating a separate community. The distance and the danger of travelling from this section to the church in New Haven first prompted the move. However, much difficulty prevented an early secession and it was not until 1785 that East Haven was founded as an independent township. The town still thrives as a very successful one, but the western part along the Quinnipiac River has returned to New Haven as of 1881 and so it has remained, the Borough of Fair Haven East. This is the location of the house.

The house, which is built of brick probably from the nearby brick yards of North Haven, was built probably by Samuel Hemingway about 1760. This was the Samuel who was married to Mehitable Denison and whose son Samuel operated a hotel in this house. It was for many years called Hemingway Tavern, but should not be confused with the more famous Hemingway Tavern of East Haven which has also been recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey and which has since been destroyed.

Samuel Hemingway, the hotel keeper, was also reputed to be one of the wealthiest slave owners in the vicinity, and it is not more than a score of years since the slave house on the Widow Smith property has disappeared.

The Hemingway name is synonymous to prominence in the annals of North Haven and East Haven. All the Hemingways in this section sprang from the same progenitor, and included among the descendants were such distinguished personalities as Jacob Hemingway the first Yale Divinity student and graduate, and Merit Hemenway (using the English spelling) who founded M. Hemenway and Sons, Silk Manufacturers whose name has become a household word via their products.

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The Widow Smith, who was by name Sibyl Smith and who acquired this property from her father in 1822, remained the owner until 1893. She was a widow for a considerable number of years, and because of her long period of ownership the house has taken the appellation of the Widow Smith House.

The house is in very good condition and is unspoiled by excessive modernism. It has more than its share of niceties. It is different from the usual brick houses of this state of the same period in that it has just two end chimneys rather than the customary four.

A few years ago destiny jeopardized this old structure with fire, but it is with warmth to our hearts that we realize that this same destiny controlled the flames after only a minimum of destruction.

The present owner is Mrs. Baleslaw Dapkiewioz.

Sources of information: History of East Haven - S. E. Hughes.
Families of Ancient New Haven-Vol III
Jacobus.
Commemorative Biographical Record of
New Haven County.
East Haven and New Haven Land Records.

Author: *John F. Flanagan*

Approved:

Date:

2/7/41

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